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TRAINING OF THE WILL AND CHARACTER

-USSR-

by V. A. Krutetskiy

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FOREWORD

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TRAINING OF THE WILL AND CHARACTER

-USSR-

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The Ability to Overcome Difficulties and its Meaning in Life

This happened on the night of 17 January, 1960. The southern islands of the Kuril Chain were suddenly attacked by a hurricane of enormous force. The snow flurries fiercely raged on the shore. The sea groaned and resembled a boiling cauldron. Waves the height of a many storied building scarred the ocean. The lights in the village suddenly went out. The ferocious wind snapped a steel cable and tore from anchor a small self-propelled barge moored in the bay. Its small crew fought bravely, but was powerless to do anything. The small vessel was soon covered over with a thin layer of ice, its engines stopped, and the radio transmitter went out of commission. The tiny craft, not over 15 meters long, went out of control and was bounced about like a toy by the waves. The barge was swept out into the ocean. Not intended for sea travel, the barge was not even equipped with a map, fishing tackle, devices for obtaining fresh water, or even any significant reserves of food and water. The crew of the barge consisted of four Soviet soldiers between the ages of 20 and 21: Junior Sergeant Askhat Ziganshin, engine mechanics Privates Anatoliy Kryuchkovskiy and Filipp Poplavskiy, and Seaman Ivan Fedotov. The first three were members of the Young Communist League. The first thing the fellows did was to take stock of their food reserves. These consisted of a little over one bucket of potatoes, a can of pork fat, one and a half cans of meat, a kilogram of cereal, a loaf of

bread, and a very small quantity of fresh water. Their drift course was almost constantly fraught with fierce storms having wind velocities of up to 120 kilometers per hour which raised waves to heights of up to 12-15 meters. The raging waves tossed the barge from side to side. The days passed, then the weeks. The four brave men fought manfully against the forces of the ocean.

Despite the severe limitation of daily food intake which the men imposed upon themselves, accounting for every drop of water and every gram of food, there finally arrived a day when they were down to their last potato. They began to eat the leather from their boots; they cut their boots into leather straps, boiled them in the salty sea water, and then fried and ate them. The leather portions of an old concertina which they had on board suffered the same fate. They followed the lubricating petroleum jelly. They drank the rusty water intended for engine cooling purposes. Sometimes they were helped by the rains. Severe tests were imposed on the four youths, but they were not broken by their privations, they did not even think of surrender, managed to keep their wits about them, and did not lose their fighting spirit even when the excruciating hunger and thirst had completely weakened them physically. As things became more difficult, their discipline, organization, comradely spirit, stamina, and restraint merely increased. And they won! On the forty-ninth day after being set adrift, they were noticed by American pilots from the aircraft carrier Kearsarge, which took them on board. By now, they were barely conscious from weakness, their vision and hearing were dulled, and their eyes were inflamed. Each of them had lost about 20 kilograms in weight.

Thus ended this unprecedented voyage, in which the heroic crew of the barge served as a living example of unbending will and firm character. Their Communist character traits and powerful will were the factors which enabled the youths to come out victorious in their struggle against the forces of nature. After all, other men, particularly those with an individualistic attitude, have on other similar occasions fallen prey to anger and despair, exhibiting hostility and egoism, fighting over the last swallow of water, falling prey to jungle instincts, and going insane.

It was quite a coincidence that on the same day when the American aircraft carrier saved the four brave Soviet soldiers, there appeared stories in the newspapers about a man picked up by an Australian military vessel off one of the islands in the Indian Ocean. The man looked at everyone with terror-filled eyes, and constantly strained to run away from people. This unfortunate individual turned out to be

one of the crew members of the fishing vessel "Semenget Baru", which had drifted for 35 days after being shipwrecked. Of the 22 crew members aboard, 12 died of thirst and hunger, while the other 10 reached the island. Here two of them went out of their mind. The other 8 left them behind untended and went off to search for inhabited area. One of the two was picked up by the Australian vessel. Nothing is known of the fate of his companion.

In his greeting of the Soviet soldiers, N.S. Khrushchev noted that their feat served as a brilliant demonstration of manliness and willpower. These are precisely the qualities required of every true Young Communist League member. The young Communist does not give up, does not throw up his hands, but strives persistently to overcome all obstacles even under the most difficult conditions.

Several years ago, Vladimir Savvich Pashchinskiy, who had lost both hands at the battlefront during the last war, graduated with excellent marks from the Metrostroy Technical School in Moscow. Many of those who knew him could not help but wonder what a man with no hands could do. But Vladimir Savvich had his own firm views on the subject. The Metrostroy School newspaper carried a detailed account of his life and diligence. He was not content with what he had achieved when after persistent efforts he learned to take care of himself in every respect, managing to comb his hair, shave, and eat. Having decided to enter a technical school, he undertook to build special devices which would enable him to hold a hammer, file, fountain pen, and drafting equipment. Vladimir Savvich alone knows the amount of effort it took to master these instruments. He not only learned to write well, but his drawing ability was envied by many of his fellow students. All of this gave Vladimir Savvich the right to say to his classmates who sometimes complained of the hardships of schoolwork: "What do you mean, it's hard? There is nothing impossible provided you have an unwavering desire to achieve it". This man of great will and high work capacity inspires admiration in all those who come in contact with him.

Some youths and girls who read this might think that the cases cited above demonstrate an enormous amount of willpower and firmness of character which are necessary only under exceptional circumstances, and lack any special significance in daily life. But is this really the case? All you have to do is look around, remember the books and newspapers you have read, and recall the motion pictures you have seen about our Soviet day to day existence.

At the Moscow "Dinamo" factory, there works a young girl by the name of V. Sogalova. Recently, one of the

youth newspapers /Moskovskiy Komsomolets (The Moscow Komsomol Member), 10 March, 1960/ carried a story about her and her friend Marinka. The biography of the two girls is of some interest. After graduation from the ten-year school, they failed to gain admission into a university on the basis of the competition. Their families promised to find easy work for them.--Marina, for example, was offered a position at a polyclinic registration desk. She was told that it would be easy there. But the girls wanted only to work at a large factory or plant. They found jobs at the solid insulator workshop of the "Dinamo" factory. They started out in the component filing production stage. They found the work difficult at first, and success did not come at once. Unaccustomed to physical labor, they grew tired quickly; their heads ached from the rumble of the lathes and the grinding of the files. There were minutes when the girls did not attempt to hide their tears because of a bloodied finger. The first parts they worked on failed to pass inspection. There were minutes when the girls envied all hospital receptionists sitting in clean rooms with clean hands. But this was just a momentary weakness on their part. The girls did not give up and continued to forge ahead toward their goal. The rejections became fewer and fewer as they gained confidence in operating the machines. Finally there came the day when the girls had fully mastered their new profession. They are no longer frightened away by difficulties--they have learned not to be afraid of obstacles and to believe in their own powers.

This case is in no way exceptional. These are our everyday labors, one of the common facts which fill our everyday life. Its interest lies in that it shows clearly the importance of willpower and firm character in any task or undertaking.

All of the actions and thoughts of the Soviet people are directed in the final analysis toward the realization of the great task of building a Communist society in our country. The 21st Congress of the Communist Party announced that our country is presently at a new stage in its historical development. The building of a Communist society is now a direct practical aim of the Party and people. In order to build Communism, it is necessary to expend an enormous amount of effort and to overcome a number of obstacles and difficulties.

Successes along this road, as well as our rapid progress toward the goal is to a great extent determined by the fact that our people are exhibiting a firm character and unwavering will to struggle on behalf of Communist construction. The training of both will and character thus

constitutes one of the most important aspects of educating the younger generation. It is after all quite clear that the task of completing Communist construction in our country will rest basically on the shoulders of our youngsters.

A spineless individual who lacks firm character can not successfully cope with this problem. Our Soviet youth must be ideologically Communistic, firm, and manly; it must not be afraid of difficulties, but should rather meet them head on and conquer them. It is precisely this type of education that our youth is receiving from the Communist Party, the Young Communist League, the schools, the factories, and the higher educational institutions. As a rule, the private goals and interests of Soviet young people coincide in this respect with those of society and the State; each of our young people seek to be of maximum service to the society.

The Young Communist League members are our vanguard! The glorious traditions of the League consist in being in the most difficult places, taking on the most responsible tasks in the struggle, and in going to the places where the basic battles are being waged.

Three hundred and fifty thousand young patriots took part in the conquest of 36 million hectares of virgin soil. The young fellows and girls have taken it upon themselves to build with their own hands 100 major metallurgical, chemical, and power-producing enterprises. These projects have been proclaimed a part of the Young Communist League's crash program.

Carrying League passports, young patriots are traveling to the eastern and northern regions of our country. The limitless reaches of our taiga and tundra, the shores of the eastern and northern seas, and the transpolar regions are awaiting our young settlers. Grateful and absorbing is the task of building cities, settlements, mines, and factories, extracting coal, oil, and non-ferrous metals in the unsettled territories, and taking part in the construction of the largest hydro-electric stations in the world! The solution of all of these problems is, of course, fraught with many difficulties. This was noted by N.S. Khrushchev in his speech at the 13th Congress of the Young Communist League. Referring to the League members, he said: "They have had to suffer many hardships and privations, especially in the first stages of their endeavor. But they did not let the hardships and privations frighten them away, and joining in battle with them like true patriots, finally emerged victorious".

And so, there is not a single field of industry, science, or social activity in which success comes quickly and easily after a journey along a smooth path. All major

scientists, innovators in industry and agriculture, and Heroes of Socialist Labor achieved their success only as a result of a persistent struggle against the obstacles which barred their way.

At the December 1958 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there appeared a guest speaker by the name of Ivan Loginov, a tractor driver by profession. In his address before the delegates, he told of his invention of an automatic tractor control. Using his remote control device, two persons can operate from six to eight tractors. Ivan Loginov had to overcome many difficulties, but his firm character permitted him to overcome the obstacles and to realize his goal.

And were there not many difficulties confronting the collective at the "Karavayevo" sovkhos (state farm) in the Kostromskaya Oblast, which, making use of the local breed of cattle, managed to develop the remarkable Kostroma breed that surpasses in weight and milk yield many of the finest Dutch, Danish, and Swiss breeds? How great must have been the perseverance in overcoming obstacles in order to produce a breed of stock some of whose individual specimens produce as much as 15,000 liters of milk per year!

Our entire nation knows the name of industrial innovator G. Bortkevich, whose discoveries made possible a considerable increase in metal cutting speeds. But it was only numerous experiments and enormous labor that he succeeded in finding the most suitable geometric form for his cutters, selected a new material for these cutters (the old material turned out to be unsatisfactory), managed to eliminate lathe vibration, and constructed a jig for the removal of shavings. Just imagine what would have happened if this work had been undertaken not by Bortkevich, but by some other spineless individual who feared complications, no matter how capable he may have been!

If you think carefully, you will see quite easily that a firm will and character are needed in any undertaking and profession. After all, any activity is connected with the overcoming with more or less considerable difficulties; it is precisely for this reason that it cannot be fully successful if one is lacking in perseverance, resolution, purposeful intent, and energy. It is possible that some readers will regard this as an exaggeration. Does it not indeed seem at times that success is determined primarily by a man's abilities or some special circumstances and conditions? This, however, is only an illusion.

What was it that allowed simple Young Communist League member, Lutsia Shimul', field team leader at the Kolkhoz imeni the USSR Supreme Soviet, to obtain a large corn harvest

in Belorussia, where formerly this crop had almost never even been seen? Is it possible that she was fortunate in having unusually favorable conditions working on her behalf, such as good soil, high-quality seed, and favorable weather? The answer is no. Her seed were of the most ordinary variety, the weather was almost constantly "Belorussian", and the soil made available for the project was as a matter of fact rather poor and not well ploughed. At first, she was obliged to work alone. "I won't have my people working at this foolish game" declared the chairman of the kolkhoz. Only her will and her character permitted the girl to stand her ground and prove her mettle. Planting the seed by hand, she was barely able to straighten up from fatigue after a full day's work. With great difficulty she managed to organize a field work team; she and her girlfriends rooted out the weeds, fed the young plants, and loosened the soil in the furrows. She finally earned her well-deserved success..

Of course, no-one will deny the role of ability, but even a high degree of talent cannot in itself assure the achievement of the proposed goal if a man lacks a developed will and character and is unable to work resolutely and diligently. The great Russian composer P.I. Chaykovskiy once spoke out on this very point; he pointed out that through intensive effort and concentrated willpower it is always possible to have one's own way, and that even a mediocrity can achieve greater success in his endeavors than a lazy genius. If a capable or even talented individual is not accustomed to systematic and intensive work, he frequently becomes a superfluous good for nothing.

In this sense, the most important ability a man can have consists in his capacity for intensive and unrelenting effort. V.I. Surikov, a talented Russian painter, would sometimes draw several hundred preliminary sketches before starting one of his paintings. L.N. Tolstoy was a great writer, but even he, as a rule, revised his work many times, polishing up every sentence. In order to write his History of Geological Research in Siberia, the outstanding Russian geologist V.A. Obruchev read and examined over 12,000 books, articles, and manuscripts.

It was not in vain that the outstanding musician Anton Rubinshteyn said that talent was nothing more than work, will, and patience. The great scientist Thomas Edison was on solid ground when he jokingly remarked that genius was one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration,--after all, he himself carried through 6,000 experiments before he was able to find a satisfactory material for his light bulb filament.

And so, without will and firm character, it is impossible to reel and secure success in any field.

The Meaning of Will and Character

But just what is it that we call will and character?

"Character" is a Greek word which, translated into Russian means a trait, feature, or peculiarity. Character is defined as the peculiar and habitual manner of a man's behaviour wherein is manifested his attitude toward his environment.

The fundamental consideration in the formation of a man's character lies in the goals and problems which he poses for himself, as well as in their importance and significance from the social standpoint. This is not enough, however. It is necessary not only to strive toward high and noble aims, but also to bring these aims to fruition by overcoming the obstacles one encounters along the way. Indeed, what is the sense in setting even the most noble goals if they are not to be realized in life? For this reason, will is the nucleus and pivot of character.

One speaks of whether a man has a strong or weak character with reference to the presence and development of wilful traits in him. A weak will and character are to all intents and purposes identical with an individual's lack of ability to achieve his goals in spite of difficulties and obstacles, to exercise self control, to exhibit a capacity for purposeful action, and to demonstrate the qualities of manliness and coolheadedness.

One's character is, moreover, determined not only by wilful traits. Let us suppose that a man has the ability to have his way, that is, to achieve his goals and to overcome obstacles barring this achievement. What of the precise nature of the goals one sets for himself in life, however? A man can have a strong will, but it is still possible that he may direct it toward the achievement of strictly private, egoistic, and therefore antisocial aims. We cannot, of course, consider the willpower of a criminal, the purposefulness and perseverance of a seeker after wealth and status, and the courage and resolution of some common hooligan as positive character traits. For this reason, one speaks not only of will alone, but rather of "a morally educated will". A man of strong will and truly firm character is only one who reconciles his private interests and goals with sound social aims, one who poses before himself socially beneficial aims and overcomes all of the obstacles lying along the path to their achievement.

We take wilful acts as denoting various actions which are connected with the overcoming of obstacles and require definite effort. Will is needed in order to force oneself to get out of bed in the morning, to master one's profession, as well as to realize a goal such as the one the pilot Mares'yev set for himself; the willpower needed in the first case will be insignificant, quite great in the second example, and enormous in the third. The greater the obstacle one has to overcome, the greater the willpower one has to exercise.

These obstacles are of two types--internal and external. Internal obstacles include contrary desires, lethargy, laziness, fatigue, fear, a false sense of shame, false pride, obstinacy, etc. Among the external obstacles are objective difficulties which arise under natural conditions, or hindrances and troubles connected with other people, the solution of new problems, the high level of performance required to carry out some complex task, the improvement of sports achievements, the attainment of mastery in a given profession, etc.

We are now faced with the question as to how one can develop a strong will and firm character.

Before answering this question, we must consider the actual wilful character traits to be developed, as well as the manner in which they are manifested.

Purposeful intent.

Purposeful intent is made manifest in an individual's subordination of his behaviour to a single dominant and changeless purpose of great social significance and representing the meaning of life; the purposeful man must exhibit readiness and resolution to devote all of his energies and abilities toward the carefully planned and unrelenting struggle to achieve this goal. The final goal is subdivided into particular secondary aims and problems which constitute necessary steps along the path to achievement.

The ideal purposeful man was V.I. Lenin, the genius who founded our Party and State. He devoted the whole of his life to the great task of liberating the workers and building a new social system in our country.

Let us recall the brilliant singleness of purpose exhibited by the young World War II heroes Aleksandr Matrosov and Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya. These heroes died at a very early age, but how great, full, and brilliant were their lives!

Such outstanding scientists as Lomonosov, Pavlov, Michurin, and others were endowed with a high degree of purposefulness.

Instructive in this respect is the biography of the

inventor-scientist Tsiolkovskiy, whose ideas on the conquest of space are presently being so successfully realized in our country. Having lost his hearing in childhood and deprived of the opportunity of receiving a systematic education, he nevertheless demonstrated an unflagging interest in science and technology. As a youth, he went to Moscow, where he undertook the individual study of a number of special subjects. Forced to limit his expenses to 10-15 rubles per month, he lived on a very meagre diet, spending only several kopecks a day on food. He used the rest of his money to buy scientific books and equipment for his home laboratory. It may be said with full justification that only Tsiolkovskiy's purposefulness enabled him to become a major scientist and inventor.

Firm principles and independence.

A man is called principled and independent if he subordinates his behaviour to his own principles, views and convictions which stem out of the Communist world outlook. Such a person does not fall prey to attempts at coercing him into actions which contradict his convictions. This, however, does not imply the rejection of any external influence. A principled and independent human being is prepared to examine the advice and instructions of others, knowing how to critically analyze, evaluate, weigh, and act upon the appropriate ones.

If, on the other hand, a person chooses to reject any external influence simply because it is external, and if he persists in exhibiting an undue contrariness to anything asserted by other people, then this in turn represents a peculiar variety of weakness of will called negativism (from the Latin word "nego", meaning I negate or deny). Striving to act on his own at all costs and contrary to the advice of others, the negativist frequently comes into conflict with his own views and convictions.

Yet another manifestation of a weak will may be termed suggestibility. A suggestible person easily falls under the influence of others, and can perform acts which again do not agree with his views and convictions. Such a person is unable to examine critically the advice of others and to resist it if need be; he is, in short, easily swayed and convinced. Sometimes young people tend to use profane language, smoke, drink, and perform ugly acts because they have fallen under a bad influence and are unable to extricate themselves, though knowing full well that they are behaving badly and as unworthy citizens. Thus they become the victims of their own lack of willpower. We would like to take this opportunity to remind such young people of the words of warning uttered by N.K. Krupskaya: "A man without willpower

is a toy in the hands of any passing hoodlum" /N.K.
Krupskaya, On Training and Upbringing, page 222,
Uchpedgiz, 1946/.

I cannot resist telling in this connection a very instructive story which I gleaned from my own practice.

Tenth-grader Volodya K. was a good pupil, friendly toward his classmates, a disciplined boy, and a participant in social activities. Despite all of these good qualities, however, he exhibited a lack of willpower, a propensity to retreat and surrender his ground. The lad fell under the influence of a group of youngsters of his own age who together made up a sort of "regular bunch". These fellows were rude, unruly, and as was later discovered, had engaged in petty thievery. They flaunted these qualities in front of others and jeered Volodya, calling him a "lamb". Once they dragged Volodya into a soccer game during which he broke a window. His new friends did not "squeal" on him; what is more, the leader of the band assumed the blame and paid for the glass. This "magnanimous act" finally succeeded in making Volodya succumb to the influence of the hooligans. Gradually he began to swear and smoke. "He's no lamb. He's one of us now!" the leader praised him when Volodya for the first time took part in one of the drinking bouts. His new "friends" hinted that "one good turn deserves another". And so Volodya committed a petty burglary in order to buy drinks for the gang members. It got worse as time went on. Volodya became a poor student, started cutting classes, and began to be rude to his teachers. He knew full well that he was rolling down an inclined plane. But although he shuddered at the thought, he could not bring himself to break with his cronies who were dragging him (as he clearly saw) along an evil path. Finally, Volodya took a passive part in stealing some underwear from an attic. Only through the decisive intervention of his teachers and the school Young Communist League organization was Volodya able to sever his ties with this pernicious influence. It was in this way that a lack of willpower almost ruined the youth's whole life.

And so, both the suggestible person and the negativist are weak-willed; since they both are unable to act in accordance with their views and convictions and to subordinate their actions to the dictates of reason. One accepts blindly, the other rejects equally blindly the influence of other human beings.

Resoluteness.

Resoluteness denotes that quality which enables men to make quick and well-reasoned decisions under difficult

circumstances and to act upon them without undue delay.

The ability to make decisions at the right time simply involves the thinking through of a situation at a crucial moment. Resoluteness does not imply haste. A resolute man is characterized by a well-reasoned coolness in decision making if the circumstances allow him to think the situation through without taking immediate action. During this time, he can gain a better grasp of the problem, evaluate it, collect supplementary data, and proceed to make the right decision on the basis of all available information. An indecisive person either thoughtlessly hurries in deciding what he should do without taking into account all of the circumstances, or delays unnecessarily; both modes of action can lead to failure.

A resolute man makes both well-founded and timed decisions. He carefully weighs and compares all of the possibilities, carefully thinks things out, and then plans for the future.

One result of making a reasoned decision is the concomitant steadfastness and absence of superfluous doubts and compunctions. It is precisely because a resolute man thinks out all of the possibilities and makes the correct choice that he is firm and unshakeable in his decisions, provided of course that the circumstances have not changed in the meantime. The indecisive person, on the other hand, is uncertain of the correctness of his decision and is therefore assailed by doubts and uncertainties which are sometimes fraught with pain; if, moreover, the action to be taken involves an element of risk, he is driven to constant reexamination, procrastination, and reneging.

Finally, another indispensable factor making up resoluteness consists in the ability to take well-timed and energetic action to follow up one's decisions.

An indecisive person, even if he has already decided to do something, is very frequently unable to force himself to undertake any action. He grasps at any straws to delay the crucial step and seeks to find artificial excuses for his inaction.

Remarkable examples of resoluteness may be found in the heroic feats of Aleksandr Matrosov or Captain Gastello, both of whom under exceptionally difficult circumstances managed to quickly weigh the situation, adopt a well-grounded decision involving self-sacrifice, and then proceeded to act without any second thoughts.

One can cite an instance from the life of some young people. A trade school student has this story to tell: "I sighted a drowning comrade, came to a quick decision, and plunged into the water. I am not a good swimmer, but my

action was not a rash one. I realized that the two of us (I do swim a little) could be saved in time, while he alone would have drowned before help had arrived". This is an example of a rapid but reasoned decision followed by courageous action.

Sometimes it seems to young people that one should not change his decision under any circumstances, that to do this implies weakness of character. They go along with their plans simply because they have already begun to carry them out, despite the fact that all reasonable considerations seem to contradict such a course of action. Bear in mind that it is bad for a man to relinquish his goals under the influence of difficulties. A strong-willed man, however, is always prepared to give up a decision and to bring action to an end if he sees that his decision or action is incorrect or unwise either on account of a change in the circumstances or because it was poorly thought out.

Perseverance.

A persevering man always carried out his decisions to their completion, knows how to reach the desired end, and is capable of overcoming all manner of difficulties and obstacles barring its achievement despite occasional defeats and misfortunes.

It would be instructive at this point to recall the life of the scientist Faraday, the discoverer of electromagnetic induction. For many years, the notes he made on his innumerable experiments would end in the very same laconic phrase: "No result". And how could one forget the words of Marx: "There is no high road to achievement in science; its pinnacles can only be reached by those who, unafraid of exhaustion, struggle to scale the rocky slope" /K. Marx, Das Kapital, Vol. 1, page 23, Gospolitizdat, 1955/. These words of Marx can be applied to any sphere of human endeavor.

One shining example of perseverance is Aleksey Mares'yev. It would seem at first that this true son of the Motherland set an impossible goal for himself! How enormous and almost insurmountable were the obstacles which he overcame without swerving from the chosen path.

One ought, however, to draw a distinction between perseverance and the negative quality of obstinacy. A persevering individual strives toward a goal whose importance and social value are self-evident, while the obstinate person seeks after unwise ends and consequently engages in useless and occasionally even harmful action. The stubborn individual frequently realizes that he is wrong and that his actions lack purpose, but nevertheless continues to act out of a desire to have his own way at all costs.

Young people frequently misunderstand and misconstrue obstinacy as a manifestation and peculiar "manner" of resoluteness, firmness of principle, and independence. Such young fellows and girls think that it is absolutely necessary to defend one's views and opinions under any circumstances, even though these views may turn out to be erroneous. To give in in their opinion is tantamount to exhibiting a lack of willpower. Here is a typical utterance made by this type of person: "Stubbornness is not a very bad quality, after all, it gives a man confidence in his own powers. I want to be independent and to learn to act on my own initiative. What I do may be stupid and bad, but at least it's the way I want to do it"; "what I maintain and defend is not what I say and do, but rather my own right to independent decision and opinion. To me, the crucial question is not who may be right, but whose views will prevail".

These opinions are of course incorrect. In such cases, the tendency toward independence takes on ugly forms and invites much unhappiness in life. Actually, stubbornness is nothing more than a form of spinelessness, since the obstinate individual is one who is incapable of conquering his own drives and refusing to undertake courses of action whose error and harm he himself realizes.

Restraint, stamina, and self-control.

These character traits refer to an individual's ability to restrain himself from actions which he recognizes as unnecessary or harmful under a given set of circumstances.

A.S. Makarenko pointed out: "A strong will is not only the ability to want and to attain something, but also the power to deny something to oneself when this is required... There can be no machine without a brake, nor can the human will operate without brakes" /A.S. Makarenko, Works, Vol. 4, page 462, Publishing House of the RSFSR (Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic) Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1951/. A man of restraint knows how to restrain his emotions when necessary, is complete master of his moods, and does not allow himself to act irrationally. He does not succumb to panic even under difficult conditions, always maintaining a cool head. A restrained man must demonstrate the qualities of endurance and patience, as well as the ability to exhibit stamina in the face of misfortunes and physical privations (such as extreme conditions of heat and cold); in addition, he must be able to hold his needs in check (hunger, thirst, and the need for rest). We have only to recall the four heroes whose story was told at the beginning of this brochure.

Manliness and courage.

Manliness and courage are qualities exhibited by

people who strive toward socially useful goals despite obstacles that may imperil their lives or well-being.

Both of these qualities imply an ability to overcome fear and hesitation, as well as to be ready for risk-laden and dangerous acts out of a sense of social responsibility and high purpose. But a brave man is not always able to withstand privations, moral and physical suffering, and adversities, nor can he always be restrained and resolute. Manliness implies in addition to courage, the qualities of resoluteness, restraint, coolness even in the face of mortal peril, self-confidence, confidence in one's purpose, and readiness to render any sacrifice out of love for the Motherland. This was the type of manliness displayed by such heroes of our country as Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya, Aleksandr Matrosov, and many others. There is an old saying which goes as follows: "Some die while still alive, while aught live on e'en after death". A man who sacrifices in the name of duty deserves the right to immortality.

Young fellows and girls sometimes think that truly manful deeds can only be performed in the defense of the Motherland. This is, of course, not so. Was it not a manful act that was performed by Vera Ignat'yeva, a first-year student at the Ivanov Pedagogical Institute, who risked her own life to save a four-year-old girl trapped in a burning house? Was it not an act of heroism when ninth-grader Tofik Guseynov who saved three children from drowning in the ocean? Completely exhausted, he plunged into the water yet a fourth time in order to save the others. But this time, he did not return... Yes, this is true heroism!

It is necessary to point out that manliness can also be demonstrated at work as one labors selflessly to contribute to the building of Communism.

It had been snowing constantly for a week now. The pastures were covered with snow drifts, the large flock of sheep was almost buried under the snow. But what is that out there? It is the figure of the young shepherd Kyrgyzbay Abdibayev making his way across the snow fields and struggling to keep from sinking in the drifts. Clutching with numb hands the horns of the leader-goat, he is guiding the flock out of danger. Thus, for several days the brave shepherd trudged across the fields, and finally managed to lead the flock out of danger without losing a single sheep.

We hasten to point out that true manliness and courage are always socially justifiable. Irrational and senseless boldness, bravado, swagger, ostentatious behaviour, showing off, and a wanton display of one's devil-may-care attitude are, one must admit, displayed by many of our youths. These are all negative character traits and are incompatible with

the high moral makeup of a real man. Those young fellows who consider bravado a peculiar type of bravery are certainly in the wrong. "A daredevil is always brave. If he is brave when he doesn't have to be, think of how brave he will be when there is a need for it"; "It's the inherent Russian recklessness"; "So it's a senseless risk, so what? At least it helps to develop fearlessness and confidence"--this is but a sample of the way some of these youths think. But risk for the sake of risk, bravery of no benefit either to oneself or others, the senseless and harmful act--what good are these in developing courage which is always wise and justified? After all, can exercises in senselessness contribute anything to the development of habits of reasoned action? The young people referred to above do not stop to think of such matters. But a young fellow by the name of Ye. Vedernikov did pause to think this matter out. His letter published in the newspaper Komsomol'skaya Pravda (The Young Communist League Pravda) for 19 March, 1960, bears the title: "I almost died...and for what?" This young man went sailing on the Amur River in stormy weather. He almost perished after spending three hours in the icy water clutching a life-saver. Toward the end of the letter he asks himself the question: "Why did I do it? What good was all this heroic senselessness?" And in truth, what was it for?

How to Develop One's Own Will and Character

And so, you now know the meaning of will and character, their significance in life, and the qualities which distinguish a man of firm character. We are now faced with the following question. Are all of these traits inherent, imparted by nature, and unchanging, or are they acquired and developed in life? It is no secret that some young people underestimate the importance of education. A lack of belief in the possibility of training and improvement of the will naturally gives rise to passivity. Here are some typical statements by young people on this subject: "I have not even tried to develop these fine traits since I am convinced that even humility and sensitivity are inherent". "People are simply born with stubbornness or other character traits; there is nothing to be done about it".

It should be made perfectly clear that not a single character trait is present in a man in finished form and maintained without alteration; on the contrary, character qualities are developed, formed, and altered throughout life. Will and character are forged and developed in the process of one's life and work.

A strong will and character are not inherent qualities.

they are not a gift of nature. After all, the four heroes whose story was told at the start of this brochure were not born with strong wills. The study of the life and work of many people confirms the belief in the possibility of developing the most varied character traits. It is also to be understood that any shortcoming, no matter how firmly entrenched can be liquidated through an intense personal effort.

It is clear from the foregoing assertions that will and character are developed inseparably with the formation of a Communistic outlook and the growth of moral sensibilities--the sense of duty and responsibility. This means that above all else a man must have a definite goal in life. After all, will is manifested in the conquest of difficulties, and how can a man overcome difficulties without knowing the nature of his ideal? The nobler and more beautiful this ideal, the fuller, clearer, and more meaningful does life become. If a man lacks an ideal to guide his life, if he has no great social purpose, if he does not strive for anything, his life becomes empty and senseless. Such a man will not achieve anything meaningful in life. For this reason, every person must strive to subordinate his life to the great problems of Communist construction, posing for himself a great social goal. Only then will he be able to really pose the question of developing the will and character necessary for the achievement of this goal.

Of great importance are the individual and specific goals which a person sets for himself, developing his will and character as he brings them to fruition. These minor goals must, of course, always be subordinated to the solution of the basic purpose of life. Examples of such goals include such things as the solution of a specific industrial production problem, studying and completing one's education at the same time, improving one's sports rating, etc. All this is not only of private, but also public interest. In striving toward such a goal, you serve both yourself and society. It is in the struggle for the realization of such purposes that will and character are forged.

It is important for the young man to look beyond such specific aims toward the far horizon, seeing the part his work will play in the general effort of the Soviet people. One must remember that the attainment of a secondary goal (for example, the achievement of a high corn yield) is a factor in the solution of a more general problem (such as that of making one's collective farm a leading cattle producer), beyond which lies yet another and more general purpose (that of aiding the State plan for the improvement of cattle-raising); all of this is of course subordinated to

the main task of building Communism.

Try to evaluate your activities from the standpoint of our general problems and aims. Having done this, that which formerly may have seemed to you to be nothing more than dull, drab, everyday drudgery will now appear important and significant. The realization of this fact will give you new strength to overcome the inevitable difficulties arising in any type of work, to accept the unpleasant, dull, and boring moments, and to make your work interesting.

A most important means of developing will and character lies in the performance of socially useful work, physical work in particular. It is precisely in serious and intensive work that one's finest character qualities are forged. Let us recall the marvellous words spoken by V.I. Lenin in his speech at the 3rd Congress of the Young Communist League: "Only by working together with the workers and peasants is it possible to become a true Communist". Engaging in honest toil, striving toward high achievement in labor, and overcoming all obstacles in his way, a young man forges his will and forms his character.

Studies afford a marvellous opportunity for exercising efforts of the will. In our age of rapidly developing science and technology, it is impossible to grow and improve oneself. Many industrial innovators point out that what is needed to achieve real success in work is constant, diligent, and persistent study at home and under the guidance of engineers, experienced workers, and masters of their trade. The learning process itself requires the ability to overcome difficulties; in a sense, therefore, it is a factor in strengthening character. Let us make one comment at this point, however. Some young people do well in school because of their ability to easily "grasp" material. Because they do not have to overcome any serious difficulties, it is possible for them to fail to develop the ability and habit of surmounting obstacles; this usually has a telling influence on their future work. Once having realized this, the young person in such a position should raise his sights accordingly.

V.I. Lenin, a student of high native abilities, had no difficulty in school, and therefore did not need to develop perseverance. Observing the enormous effort being expended by his sister Olya on her piano exercises, he once said: "Here is a capacity for work to be envied!" and Volodya /Lenin's nickname/ began successfully to develop his own perseverance.

One remarkable means of developing character consists in working for and with a collective. Every man must make his own contribution to the total effort of the collective, bearing a definite part of the total social responsibility

and carrying out a specific social task. Taking an active part in social work, the general life of the collective, a man learns to live in the interests of the collective and to be guided by these interests in his behaviour. A closely knit and purposeful Young Communist League collective influences its members effectively. It exposes laziness, cowardice, and egoism; serving as an inspiration in the conquest of obstacles, it offers support in failure and prevents the loss of faith in one's powers.

The condemnation by the League collective of certain acts perpetrated by individual members, healthy criticism, and the individual demands made on its members all play a great educational role. It is known that the behaviour of an undisciplined, unrestrained young man who is unable to overcome difficulties can change radically if his actions not only fail to encounter sympathy but evoke the friendly and firm condemnation of the collective.

Of extremely great importance in the education of the will and character are private obligations to the collective. The public proclamation before the gathered members of your intention to assume certain responsibilities (in connection with work or social activities) places you under social control.

It should be borne in mind in this connection that failure to assume responsibilities, particularly for reasons of false humility or a desire to play it safe lower a member in the eyes of the collective. Let us say that a young man is directed to publish a bulletin or to organize a sports club and that he responds with something like "I'll try, but I can't promise anything. What if I can't do it". Obligations assumed in the presence of respected peers endow a man with great strength and confidence. Recall the episode from the novel by N. Ostrovskiy The Tempering of the Steel, where the author tells how Pavel Korchagin makes a solemn promise before the collective that he will stop smoking.

Taking it upon himself to fulfil certain responsibilities, a person becomes conscious of the importance and significance of his duties, and understands that failure will result in loss of respect. This consciousness impels him to successfully attain his goal and prevents him from undue hesitation in the face of difficulty.

Finally, will and firm character are products of self-education. Self-education denotes the conscious and to a certain extent independent character-building effort undertaken to develop one's desirable qualities and eliminating undesirable traits.

It is, of course, very difficult to draw the line between education and self-education. For example, the

assumption of specific individual responsibilities before the collective can in a definite sense refer both to education and self-education. The fact of the matter is that the factor of self-education enters into almost every act of learning in youth. Indeed, without a personal desire to carry out a given difficult task, without a will to overcome personal shortcomings, hardly any effort at education can be successful. Nevertheless, it is possible to speak of self-education as a special form of education.

The self-education of a Soviet man does not stem out of a desire for personal self-improvement apart from the collective and social life in general and initiated for lifting the individual above the level of the collective. The Soviet man looks upon self-improvement as a matter of great social significance. His desire to develop his own character is dictated by an ardent wish to be a worthy member of the collective, as well as to make the greatest possible contribution to his Motherland and people. This was already pointed out by Karl Marx: "The work I put in on forming myself, I perform for the benefit of society" /K. Marx and F. Engels, Selections from the Early Works, page 590, Gospolitizdat, 1956/.

Self-education.

Self-education is one of the important factors in the formation of a person's will and character. One seventeen-year-old youth spoke the truth when he said: "I understood that work on my character every day, I will not be suited for life, at least that life of which I dream".

Unfortunately, not everyone thinks this way. Frequently a man will complain and whimper about the weakness of his will and character without doing a jot to develop the traits he desires. This is the case despite the fact that to a certain extent each man is responsible for his own character, since everyone can improve and enoble his own personality. There is an old saying which teaches us that "A man is that which he makes of himself". And to a certain extent this is true. I remember one case when a seventeen-year-old tenth-grader told me that it was his teacher's fault that he had a bad character. Apparently, it had not even occurred to him that at his age a man is obliged to direct himself along the right path without waiting to be led by the hand.

One can speak seriously of self-education only when a man exhibits a conscious desire to develop or reinforce positive character traits and correct modes of behaviour, as well as to liquidate certain shortcomings, negative habits, and poor ways of behaving. Such a desire, if it is not already present, should arise in every young man if he truly

wants to become a real human being and to live a bright and full life. This desire must take on an active character without merely remaining dormant in the stage of good intentions. To transform character while sitting with folded hands is, in effect, the same as improving the singing voice through silence.

The desire to develop will and character is insufficient, however; one must, in addition, know how this is done and be able to chart the correct course. Many young men ask whether there are special exercises which can help one to strengthen character just as physical exercises help strengthen muscles. Some of them try to develop such exercises on their own. I know of adolescents and even young fellows and girls who think that they can strengthen their will and character by not confessing some mischievous act, being rude and aggressive with adults, and stubbornly defending one's opinion no matter how wrong. "The best way to develop will", said one sixteen-year-old boy, "is not to give in to anybody on anything!"; "What, me apologize? Never!" said another, "I am a man of principle, never in my life have I apologized to anyone!" Other youngsters think up artificial tricks to strengthen their will which are frequently harmful to their health. Such tricks include grasping the bare ends of an electrical cord in an attempt to withstand the pain, exercising as long as possible without taking a breath, making risk dives from a high bank into an unknown river, etc. One of the older youths once told me: "I am trying to develop my willpower by eating a lot of smoked herring and then not drinking as long as possible, or else I take up a book and having reached the most interesting place, toss it aside. Sometimes I want very much to read the end, but I try not to succumb to this desire".

Another one told how, with the purpose of strengthening his courage, stamina and resoluteness, he forced himself to walk along a third-story ledge. A third one makes a special practice of attending film comedies with but a single purpose in mind--that of developing restraint by refraining from laughter.

Of course, such "exercises" could not and did not lead to any positive results, since their artificiality precludes any connection with actual obstacles likely to be encountered in life; it is only by overcoming such real difficulties that the will is strengthened. And this is understandable: by overcoming artificial, contrived obstacles, it is impossible to develop the habit of mastering actual everyday situations. In their day to day behaviour all of the above-mentioned youngsters continued to exhibit a lack of character and weakness of will; if any of them

did finally acquire a strong character, it was certainly not by this means.

No, the development of will and character does not require any special exercises, particularly such as those described above. Will and character are forged in the process of overcoming real day to day obstacles, in the struggle against life's hardships, and in everyday work.

Many people hold the wrong view that the will can be strengthened only in the performance of heroic deeds under special conditions and circumstances. Such comrades dream of becoming heroes without noticing that they can exercise their will at every step they take in life. The will can be exercised in the performance of each task at school, at work, or in the social sphere. Each individual act, although perhaps insignificant in itself, has its effect on the formation of will and character. M. Gor'kiy said that even a small victory over oneself strengthens a man immeasurably. N. Ostrovskiy also wrote that he learned to control himself in small matters, until finally he was able to hold himself in his fist, so to speak.

It is necessary to remember well that will and character are developed in small things, and that a man can only exhibit a firm character in performing great deeds if that character has been forged on hundreds of minor occasions.

Let us return in this connection to the example with which we began this booklet. The American journalists were unanimous in posing the question as to where the four young men had gotten their astounding stamina, discipline, and strength of character. And indeed, where did they acquire these qualities?

The crux of the matter is simply that the best preparation one can have for a great feat consists in the precise and conscientious performance of one's everyday duties as well as in the constant surmounting of life's difficulties. The four heroes were made tough by their studies and work, participation in sports, and membership in a collective. Askhat Ziganshin is a Tatar. In school he had a difficult time learning the Russian language, but he studied diligently and achieved fine marks. In his final year at school, he was involved in an interesting episode. It happened on a difficult propaganda march which the school seniors had undertaken that winter. The group ran into trouble with its food supply; some of the youngsters ate their rations within the first few days. Askhat, for his part, did not touch a single "inviolable" piece of food and readily surrendered the contents of his knapsack to the communal kitty. This was the kind of boy Askhat showed himself to be in school. Having graduated

successfully from the mechanics' school, he worked as a tractor driver on the kolkhoz fields, over-fulfilling his norms by two or three times. While on this job he was involved in another incident. One night, his tractor got stuck in the river. The water leaked into the driver's cabin and gagged the engine. In spite of the cold, Askhat did not abandon the machine, but proceeded to repair it and to drive it to shore. Such was Askhat the working man. Well, you tell me now, was it just by accident that he emerged victorious in this great test which pitted the strength of his will against the might of nature's forces?

Anatoliy Kryuchkovskiy had had a difficult life. His father was killed on the battlefield. In addition to attending school, he helped his mother at home and worked in the fields. Later, he worked as a machinist in a sugar factory. His friends tell us that he always undertook the most difficult task and had no fear of difficulty.

Filipp Poplavskiy worked as a builder. His friends also say of him: "He was red hot on the job! Hardships and troubles were all as nothing to him!" Ivan Fedotov, who came from a small village on the Amur River, had also passed through the "school of hard knocks". And the Amur River does not like people who are poor in spirit. On one occasion Ivan saved a vessel from disaster. What happened was that his motor boat rammed some rafts on a stormy night. Ivan was knocked from his feet and crushed by a heavy packing case. Still, he managed to reach the alarm lever and signal "full reverse". Only a month prior to their historical voyage, the brave foursome had been cited for bravery in rescuing their barge which sprang a leak one night. The fellows worked in water up to their chests to plug the leak. The 20 passengers who were aboard the vessel at the time (including 6 children) did not even suspect the danger.

This is where each of the four young men had gotten his strong will. And it is always so.

The 12 March, 1960, issue of Komsomol'skaya Pravda carried a story of a seemingly commonplace incident. A shipment of cement had been delivered to a school. The railway car had to be unloaded quickly. The ninth-graders worked all night--from 3 in the afternoon to 7 in the morning--to unload it in time. Was this a heroic feat or wasn't it? Of course not! But it was certainly wonderful preparation for a feat. It might be said without exaggeration that the character of the children who did this work became steeled overnight. And if this was not merely another incident in their lives, it might be said with confidence that they will grow up into strong and resolute adults.

Although there are no recipes for the training of will and character which are suitable for all possible situations in life, one can give some suggestions which may be of assistance to young people in their attempts to acquire strong will and character, provided that they become imbued with the desire to work toward such an end.

It must be borne in mind in this connection, that the development of will and character in oneself is not an easy task; its successful completion requires prolonged and systematic efforts. Rapid and easy success in this undertaking is not to be expected. After all, we are speaking not of the development of a capacity for momentary enthusiasm, occasional diligence, or inadvertently correct acts. This ability is inherent in even the most undisciplined, lazy, and organized individual. What we are speaking of is the development of permanent and habitual norms of behaviour. And strong behavioural habits are not formed rapidly.

Before beginning to work on oneself, it is necessary to take clear cognizance of the peculiarities in one's character, and to look with a critical eye "from the outside" as it were on one's shortcomings; it is necessary, in short, to see and recognize one's own bad points. The novelist N. Ostrovskiy wrote: "Self-education first of all requires that you carry out an objective and severe evaluation of yourself. It is necessary clearly and precisely, without pitying your pride, to investigate your own shortcomings and faults and then to decide once and for all whether you intend to reconcile yourself to them. You must ask yourself whether you are willing to bear this burden on your shoulders, or whether you would rather cast it off" [see the magazine Yunost (Youth) No 3, 1955, page 71].

If a man fails to see his own shortcomings, the need for self-education does not even occur to him. Consequently, one of the most important prerequisites for strengthening one's character is the acquisition of a habit for sober and critical self-evaluation. Judging one's actions and deeds, it is necessary to ascertain their consequences from the standpoint of the society's interests. It is also necessary to be able to pay close attention to criticism.

The great Russian writer L. N. Tolstoy, for example, placed a great deal of emphasis on the critical evaluation of one's own behaviour. While still a young man, he grew cognizant of his own weaknesses, the foremost among which he considered to be laziness, irritability, and a lack of resolution. Then he began a successful struggle against these faults.

It is clear from all that has been said so far, that older and respected comrades, teachers, parents, and the

Young Communist League organization can be of great service in any effort at strengthening will and character. Each of these groups can serve as a source of information on methods of self-education, helping to prevent errors and to take cognizance of your own peculiar character traits and shortcomings.

It is important to point out here that self-education is rarely an individual matter. It is highly beneficial in this regard to enter into a relationship with a comrade and friends in general, assisting each other, and exercising mutual control. For example, collective self-education is one of the aspects in the life of Communist labor brigades which have become a real school of Communist education for tens of thousands of young workers. The members of these brigades pose before them the problem of "studying, working, and living after the Communist fashion". In actual fact, along with other endeavors, they are engaged in self-education and the development of those qualities which distinguish a member of Communist society. Many of these brigades assume special voluntary obligations or "commandments". Along with points dealing with the over-fulfillment of production quotas and raising labor productivity, these "commandments" also cover such subjects as the development of high moral qualities. As an example, let us cite several articles from the commandments of the Aleksandr Matsuyev Communist Labor Brigade (Building Administration of the Krasnaya Presna Construction and Maintenance Trust in the city of Moscow):

"You must exhibit a keenness of mind in all that you do. Always think how to do it better. Do your work not mechanically but thoughtfully and creatively.

The brigade must abide by the rule 'all for one and one for all'. Look at it this way: one laggard shames the entire brigade; one do-nothing is a black mark on everybody; one member doing defective work means the whole brigade is in trouble.

You must share your knowledge and experience with everybody else. If you see your buddy lagging, help him out. If you cannot do something yourself, ask your friend to help you.

Don't waste time after work. They are waiting for you at school, at the trade school, or at the institute. If you have a free minute, take a book in hand. Learn as much as possible, so that you may be of even greater benefit to your people.

Seek to improve your cultural level. Put an end to your rudeness, profanity, and drinking. Don't close your eyes to hooliganism, drunkenness, and boorish behaviour.

"If somebody hurts a person in your presence, you are also to blame.

Respect the aged on the street, at home, and in the family. Be polite, cheerful, and tactful".

Let us pass on now to concrete suggestions in the area of self-education. One of the most important traits of a strong-willed person consists in his unconditional realization of his own decisions, assuming, of course, that these decisions are correct. But it is precisely for this reason that it is important to approach decision making seriously. In making a decision, it is necessary to resolve to bring it to fruition under any circumstances.

An "inner struggle" involving varied and frequently contradictory drives or motives may arise in the decision making process as a result of inner obstacles. Of special significance are cases involving the struggle of higher motives (duty, responsibility, etc.) with the lower instincts (a desire for personal satisfaction, a sense of self-preservation, etc.). The result of such a struggle is an indication of the strength of a man's will. A person can be called strong-willed only when his higher motives emerge victorious. In cases where the problem is one of deciding whether you should do something which "ought" to be done or that which you "want" to do, it is always necessary to give preference to the "ought" motive (should a contradiction be involved); even in small things it is necessary to remember that will is manifested in the ability to make yourself do that which is required, suppressing all desires and impulses in your way, such as fear, fatigue, false shame, false pride, obstinacy, the wish to have fun, certain habits, inertia, sluggishness, etc. Even in minor instances, you must learn to overcome lack of desire in the name of responsibility.

This, apparently, was well understood by the young men who wrote in their diaries: "The first moment when I learned to exercise self-control was the time when I understood the words 'you mustn't'. I first grasped their meaning when uttered by others, and then started using them with regard to myself, leaving no loopholes and ways to circumvent my own proscription"; "I have decided to struggle with myself. I am getting used to it gradually, but still have to be very carefully lest I talk myself into doing just the opposite of what I should. Sometimes, when doing an important task, I feel like standing up and walking to the window. But I say to myself: 'Don't you dare! Keep sitting!'

Let us emphasize that the truly strong-willed person is one who does not waver between the sense of duty and the drives which are in contradiction to it; the sense of duty

and social responsibility exclude for him any possibility of acting otherwise. Anyone who always intends to be guided by the above-mentioned principle must become such a disciplined man. Gradually, you will come to desire that which must be and to become enthused about doing the necessary thing at the given moment.

In the process of self-education, it is not always wise to confront oneself with the most complex and difficult tasks and aims immediately. Sometimes a young man who has not as yet acquired sufficient experience in overcoming difficulties decides all of a sudden to liquidate all of his shortcomings, bad habits, and negative traits. ("Tomorrow I start a new life!"). If he should fail to attain his goal quickly (which is quite possible, since the tasks are extremely difficult) he may become dismayed and discouraged enough to give up his efforts.

Do not, however, fall into the opposite error of confronting yourself only with easily attainable goals. The achievement of such goals does not stimulate the development of will and character. An action which truly requires an effort of will results only in the presence of a difficult aim. Nevertheless, the development of will and character is best begun with the attainment of relatively easy goals and continued in a gradual progression to more difficult ones. This not only strengthens a person's self-confidence, but also gives him a chance to acquire the necessary experience in overcoming difficulties.

Before adopting a decision, it is necessary to make certain of its correctness. Make decisions thoughtfully, do not decide in a state of exhaustion or fear, injury, or anger, when it is easy to make an error. Always be prepared to relinquish your decision if you should be convinced that it is no longer in accord with altered circumstances. Remember that in the contrary case you are behaving like an obstinate rather than a strong-willed individual. But once a decision is adopted and continues to be the correct one, do not give it up under the influence of difficulties which may arise.

Although will and character are manifested in the adoption of a decision, this in itself does not characterize fully the will of an individual. Can we recognize as strong-willed a person who only poses goals for himself (no matter how correct), only outlines his tasks (no matter how great), only makes decisions (no matter how bold), only arms himself with good intentions (no matter how praiseworthy), but fails to bring them to fruition and does not carry through with his plans? Of course not. For this reason, one of the most important factors in self-education is the

mandatory execution of adopted decision.

It is necessary to finish everything you start, no matter how unimportant it may be. Not only that, but you must do it both conscientiously and on time. Failure to act upon one's decisions weakens the will. Once you have decided to prepare a lesson for night school before you go to the cinema, and then do not abide by this resolution, simply remember that the matter is not simply one of not doing your homework, but rather one of gradually acquiring the habit of not acting upon your decisions.

Because of this, the unconditional execution of resolutions is an ideal method of strengthening will and character. Remember that keeping your word to yourself is the best indication of will. If you do not feel it in your power to keep your word, do not make the promise. But once you have given it, carry it out at all costs according to the principle "if it's promised, it's as good as done" without putting off to tomorrow what you can do today ("One today is better than two tomorrows" goes the saying), and without wasting unnecessary time and effort on pointless deliberation. Every broken promise weakens the will. Here is what N.K. Krupskaya said about the will of schoolboy Volodya Ul'yanov /Lenin/: "He developed a strong will. If he said he would do something, he did it. His word could be trusted. Once, while still a boy, he tried smoking. Catching him at it, his mother Mariya Aleksandrovna was quite dismayed and began to plead with him: 'Please stop smoking, Volodyushka'. He promised, and henceforth never touched a cigarette" /N.K. Krupskaya, Selected Pedagogical Writings, page 307, Publishing House of the RSFSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1948/.

Decisions must be implemented conscientiously, and not simply to "ease the conscience". It is necessary to put all of one's energy, knowledge, and ability into any task. If you have been selected to prepare a festive evening, to deliver a lecture, or to lead a discussion, try to carry out this assignment in the best possible fashion, even if this should require extra time and effort.

People who fail to abide by their resolutions frequently attempt to find excuses for themselves by cheating and attempting to cheat and delude themselves into thinking that the implementation of the decision would be irrational; what they are actually doing is concealing from themselves their spineless default (it is not very pleasant to look one's lack of character in the eye). For example, tossing aside an urgent task and setting out to see a popular hockey match, a young man who is ashamed to admit his own lack of character begins to think up various arguments in order to justify his

failure to abide by his decision; he may, for example, adduce the argument that there is a need for developing a love for sports, that it is better to be out in the fresh air than in a stuffy room, etc.

It is perfectly clear that "arguments" such as the above are completely without foundation. Try to catch yourself making such excuses and be able to act like a strong-willed person; cast off such "reasoning" with disdain and force yourself to act upon your original resolution. This may not be easy, but at least you will retain your self-respect. Make not concessions or contrived excuses to justify your behaviour! If you were "unable" to locate a book needed for a report but were at the same time "able" to secure a ticket to an international soccer match (although the latter was immeasurably more difficult), do not cheat yourself and try to find objective excuses: in the first instance you have definitely demonstrated a lack of character. Think rather of the great and joyful sense of satisfaction to be gained from knowing that you have emerged victorious, that you were able to conquer yourself and to become master of the situation.

One of the most important factors in self-education is the habit of viewing with a critical eye one's own behaviour and actions. It is of great benefit to put to yourself more frequently the following questions: "Did I do this correctly?", "Was this a good action on my part?", and then to answer them directly and sincerely. Think more often of how some respected person whom you know would evaluate your action, how a man whom you idolize would have acted in your place. Make it a rule to do this after each more or less responsible act; better yet, do it before you act. "The image of Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya", wrote one young girl member of the Young Communist League, "always guides me. When I evaluate any of my own actions or those of my comrades, I always think to myself: how would Zoya have acted in this situation? And if she would have acted as we had, that means our action was good; if, on the other hand, she would have acted differently, we must have acted badly. This helps me in building my character".

Here is what some other League members have to say on the subject: "Whenever I have to force myself to do something, I think of V.I. Lenin, and this has a great restraining influence. Thus I teach myself not to lie, brag, prattle, and quarrel"; "Whenever I experience pain, I recall how Nikolay Ostrovskiy withstood pain and try to act as he did"; "Pavel Korchagin is of great help to me. I compare myself to him and try to behave in the right way".

Constant training in overcoming difficulties is of decisive importance in strengthening will and character. It is said that if you want to learn to swim, get into the water; if you want to learn to overcome obstacles, don't run away but face them, place yourself in a position where you will be forced to overcome certain difficulties. This of course does not mean that you have to create difficulties for yourself by complicating the achievement of some goal. Such a course of action would be extremely unwise and would resemble the behaviour of the man who climbs out the window when there is every opportunity to leave by the door.

Will and character are forged in the process of overcoming life's hardships, so many of which are encountered by every human being.

A man must not shun these difficulties by looking for easy shortcuts at the price of forsaking his ideals. Learn not to fear difficulties. This is how true Young Communist League members behave.

Recently, one of our newspapers carried a story about a young girl named Lyatifa Dzhafarova, who is a petroleum engineer by profession. All of her life she had dreamed of working in the oil fields. But when she graduated from the institute, she was sent to work in the geological department office. All this time, her comrades were bravely overcoming various difficulties, struggling with the forces of the sea, and drilling wells in the land won over from the seas. So Lyatifa requested for a transfer into a field brigade as a simple operator. Within the first few days she seriously hurt her arm in trying to prevent an accident. Everyone thought that this girl would return to her office, particularly since the administration was still keeping her job for her. But Lyatifa chose to remain where it was most difficult. She is now head of her brigade. Undoubtedly, her will became even stronger as a result of this experience.

Another girl who refused to enjoy the comforts of "peace and quiet" was milkmaid Lyuba Sysoyeva from the Kuntsevskiy Rayon of the Moscow Oblast. After completing the tenth grade, she went to work on a collective farm where she was given the "quiet and neat" job of keeping track of milk production. "No, this quiet life is not for me!" said Lyuba, and went to work as a milkmaid. She did not stop here either, milking 75 cows per day--usually the work of two people. Her friend Galya reproached her for being too zealous. But Lyuba was not frightened away by the difficulties. Soon she began to milk 102, and then 150 cows a day! In addition to this, she applied for admission as a correspondence student at the agricultural institute. She is not longer afraid of hardships, for she is now used to

overcoming them.

Of course, the achievement of Lyuba Sysoyeva cannot be explained merely by her strong will. Other factors which contributed to her success were her education and above-average cultural level--after all, she had completed the tenth grade. This also applies to other similar cases. There can be no doubt, however, that her will and character were quite important.

If a person strives to evade difficulties in everyday life, then, as a rule, he will turn out to be helpless, pitiful, and lost in times of serious trial. It is a well-known fact that if the conditions under which a man lives and works do not require him, for example, to exercise determination, stamina, courage, etc., he will not develop the above-mentioned character traits. For this reason, you must strive to place yourself in circumstances conducive to the development of these qualities; understand, however, that these conditions are to be natural and rational.

Weak-willed people are sometimes inclined to overestimate difficulties and underestimate their own powers and capabilities. When you encounter some obstacle, do not tell yourself that you are unable to handle it; do not even admit the thought that you do not have a sufficiently strong will to overcome it.

What young person does not want to be brave and manly? Remember that everyone can promote the development of these traits in his character! If you wish to be manly, then you must turn your noble sentiments and strivings into actions: go out and help someone who is in trouble, or defend some weak individual who has been unjustly maligned. If you should see a drunkard engaging in debauchery and uttering profanities, or if you should sight a hooligan molesting a woman--don't pass by! Of course, understand that you must act not for the sake of developing your own will and character but rather out of a sense of social principle. However, in fulfilling your social obligation, you will at the same time be forging your own character. In this connection, it might be pointed out that participation in youth brigades for the maintenance of public order is not only of great national importance, but also assists in the formation of the qualities of manliness and courage in the brigade members.

If you have been wrong or are guilty of some misdeed, be able to force yourself to openly admit your guilt and error. This, of course, requires courage. Keep in mind that good saying which tells us that "if you do not admit your error you are perpetrating another".

Be able to bravely and openly criticize a wrongdoing of one of your comrades; be prepared, should there be a reason for it, to stand alone in condemning on principle the unseemly actions of a group of comrades. Only in this manner can you strengthen your character. Of course, here again, you must do this not for your own sake, but in the name of an idea. An accessory to a wrongdoing is no friend. A friend is a person who, when he sees the error perpetrated by a comrade, does not keep silent, but rather brings it out into the open.

If you should hurt one of your comrades without just cause, find it in yourself to admit that it was your fault. In such cases, you should act like Anya Alekseyeva (the novel entitled The Seventeen-Year-Olds). Justly unable to restrain her anger (she was called an "informer"), Anya acted in an ugly fashion--she slapped her girlfriend's face. Although it was hard for her, she found it in herself to announce in front of the whole class: "I would like to say that what I did shames me as a Young Communist League member, and that there is no word adequate to describe my action. I myself have come to realize my error and in great remorse am asking Belova in front of everybody to forgive me".

Take part in sports events and field trips which require courage. Crossing a stretch of terrain, fording a river, camping for the night, and cooking outdoors--all of these hardships of the "outdoor life" strengthen the will. Of the same importance to children in the upper grades is life in the Young Communist League youth camps.

Finally, of definite importance in the development of courage and manliness are exercises involving the conquest of one's fears. If you experience an irrational fear of the dark (something which occurs rather frequently in girls), make repeated attempts to master this fear, for example, by going out into the woods at night to gather twigs for the camp fire.

Young Communist League member Tamara Kravchenko (the novel The Seventeen-Year-Olds) experienced a dread of the dark staircase in the house in which she lived; she was so afraid that she thought her heart would break from fear. Well, you would say, if she was so afraid why didn't she simply avoid walking on the dark staircase alone? But what Tamara did was perfectly right. Slowly and deliberately, strengthening her will, she walked up and down the stairs to overcome her dread. It was in this fashion that she finally mastered her fear of the dark.

Those who would laugh at such a method of developing courage should listen to a story related by Hero of the Soviet Union, Pilot M. Vodop'yanov. During her school years,

the well-known aviatrix Marina Raskova was afraid of the dark. In order to overcome her fear, she would sit for hours in a dark closet despite the fact that she sometimes wept from terror. And this exercise played a definite role in her life. A boy in one of the upper grades once wrote: "I wish to be brave and manly. I am forcing myself not to be afraid. During the summer, I made myself go out into the woods at night to cross a dark ravine which frightened me". Of course, all such exercises must be viewed as supplementary. Only then will they be of benefit. But if a person dares to visit a frightening forest ravine at night but at the same time walks indifferently past a drunken hooligan, he will hardly develop a strong will and a real Soviet brand of courage.

If you want to develop restraint and self-control, then try to see to it that you don't make needless haste, speak out only having carefully considered your words, restrain yourself from unnecessary and impulsive acts, control your negative desires and sentiments, and keep from becoming irritable. Do not try to avoid unpleasant and painful medical treatment (injections, dental work, and the like). I have even encountered cases of young men who marvelled at brave and courageous individuals and are sincere in wanting to strengthen their own character, but nevertheless grow pale at the sound of a dental drill or at the sight of a hypodermic syringe or surgical lancet.

If you want to be resolute, then confront yourself with rational problems and train to overcome difficulties along the path toward their realization. Prepare a lecture on a difficult subject, write a serious article for your bulletin board newspaper, resolve to attain a high sports rating, or promise yourself to achieve high marks in some difficult subject in night school.

As regards the latter suggestion, it is no secret that many young people would regard it with scepticism. But Hero of the Soviet Union, Aleksey Mares'yev is of another opinion. He takes a great deal of pride in telling one of the stories from his life. After the war, Mares'yev was admitted to the military academy. During the war he had forgotten most of his grammar. He had a lot of trouble with this subject, particularly in learning his suffixes. Driving himself into a state of stupefaction, he spent much effort and sweat before mastering them. Of course, Mares'yev did not need to strengthen his will since he was already a highly courageous man. But anyone else faced with a similar task would have had an exceptionally fine opportunity to exercise his character.

It is ridiculous to look for any special ways to develop will if you have been getting consistently bad evaluations, have a low production record, and are having discipline problems. The training of character must start with the elimination of these personal shortcomings.

You can start on small things even in this case. For example, some of you are unaccustomed to and dislike working carefully on the solution of a difficult production problem, a complex exercise, or a difficult blueprint. Well then, start on this--establish a firm rule never to leave a task undone or unconscientiously performed.

It is possible to set up yet another rule; never make use of somebody else's solution, view everything by yourself. One of the people who followed this precept was Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya. She and her brother Shura were in the same class in school; her brother had an easy time with mathematics and physics while Zoya demonstrated a propensity and talent for literature. Finishing his assignment in mathematics or physics quickly, her brother would often invite Zoya to look at his solutions, but Zoya always declined. It sometimes took her hours to find the solution but she always found it independently despite the fact that her brother's notebook lay beside her on the table.

In this connection it was possible to give wholehearted approval to the decision adopted by one tenth grader who wrote down in his notebook: "I have begun to work hard on myself. I have long since stopped cheating on graded assignments. I am now earning 3's, but at least they are my own honest grades. This is of course only the first stage. It is better to have honest 3's than dishonest 5's". But it is even better to have honest 5's than honest 3's. And, of course, the above-mentioned pupil will eventually come to the same conclusion.

Yet another suggestion is to abide strictly by your voluntarily assumed resolution. Under no circumstances must you become distracted in performing a task either at work or at school; you must not talk with your neighbors at the next bench or desk, and you must not reply to their irrelevant questions.

It might seem to you that these are all minor points, but you just try to conduct yourself constantly in the prescribed manner, and you will quickly see that it is possible to train the will even in such minor instances. This is particularly true if some of you resemble that older girl who wrote down in her notebook: "My tongue is my enemy. Once I decided to refrain from talking to my friends throughout all my lessons. Having kept silent for one day, I began to feel as if I were losing my wits".

Finally, try to fight resolutely the bad habit of "getting into swing" before you start working, if indeed this is one of your habits.

Also of benefit to the development of will and resoluteness are exercises in concentrating attention, particularly attempts to work without distraction even under unfavorable conditions (when, for example, the wails of a child or loud music is heard from the next room).

It is highly beneficial to exercise will and character in the struggle to overcome shortcomings and bad habits (whistling, nail-biting, swearing, smoking, being stubborn and rude, etc.). Having found out your shortcomings, make a resolute attempt to eliminate them. This will be of dual value: it will give you an opportunity for exercising your will, and will also rid you of the bad habit.

If you are rude, literally watch every word and action to hold back your rudeness; if you smoke, then prove your will and stop smoking today, chasing away every thought of the habit. If you are timid and bashful, do not avoid appearing before groups and public gatherings (if, of course, you have something valuable to contribute).

One of the boys in the upper grades suffered from a speech defect. And so he began to struggle against this shortcoming. He meticulously sought to pronounce every word correctly in front of a mirror in order to develop the correct oral patterns. In order to improve his diction, he read poetry with his mouth stuffed with bread. Thus, he succeeded in eliminating this shortcoming and at the same time felt himself to be stronger and more confident. Here is what another fifteen-year-old boy said: "You used to laugh at my handwriting. Finally, I got tired of this, and decided to improve it. Every day, after finishing my lessons, I put in some extra time on handwriting improvement exercises. Despite the ironic attitude of the people at home and the jeering of my friends, I would write painstakingly on ruled paper, carefully tracing out sticks and circles. As time went on, I continued my effort. Now my handwriting is clear and pleasant to the eye. But the main thing was that I felt myself stronger and more confident".

I must say that both of these examples leave a very good impression. After all, will, as we know already, is developed in small matters. On the other hand, were these tasks really as small as all that?

Start working on the development of positive habits in yourself--do some exercises each morning, brush your teeth before going to bed at night, etc. Just remember that such things are also of dual value since they help you not only to form a good habit, but also to strengthen your will.

The training of the will and character may begin immediately upon arising in the morning. It would be of benefit if each morning as you wake up you perform a sort of "ritual of the will" consisting of arising immediately upon waking and not permitting yourself to waste time lolling around in bed. At first this might require a great deal of effort, but soon it becomes a useful habit.

In short, remember the advice of A.M. Gor'kiy, who said in a discussion with beginning writers that it is necessary to acquire faith in oneself and confidence in one's powers; he went on to say that this faith is attained only through the overcoming of obstacles, the training of the will, and the development of character. In training his body, a man becomes healthy, strong, and agile; the will must be trained just like the body.

Keep in mind that every small act is important in the development of character; there is a saying which goes: "Sow a deed and reap a habit; sow a habit--reap a will". For this reason, once you have resolved to develop a strong character, you must not deviate from your resolution for one moment.

An extremely important role in the formation of will and character is played by physical culture and sports. People with weak bodies and nerves lose their self-control more quickly, they do not have sufficient strength to carry on a struggle with obstacles barring their path to achievement, they are more prone to succumb to fear, are more easily distracted by failure, have little stamina, and are afraid of cold, moisture, heat, thirst, and hunger. Many weak and sickly people can have and have had a strong character (for example, N. Ostrovskiy), but all other things being equal, a physically sound person with a healthy nervous system is more apt to exhibit the qualities of resoluteness, endurance, restraint, and manliness. So do take part in physical culture activities and sports. This strengthens the nervous system, strengthens your powers of endurance, increases your confidence, eliminates lethargy, and aids the development of courage and resoluteness.

Of course, strong muscles alone do not assure the development of genuine willpower. Participation in physical culture activities and sports are beneficial only when a man simultaneously develops a Communist outlook and sense of duty. A healthy young man who knows how to swim, but is nonetheless spineless and cowardly will not plunge into the water to save a drowning person, while a weak and poor swimmer with a highly developed sense of duty will dive in without hesitation.

The role of physical culture and sports stands out with special clarity in the case of Askhat Ziganshin and his brave comrades. Prior to entering the armed services, all of them had been avid participants in sports. Ziganshin was fond of ski-ing, cycling, and soccer. Poplavskiy was a skier, gymnast, and track man. Kryuchkovskiy was very successful in light athletics, swimming, and gymnastics. Fedotov also had a strong body and nerves. There can be no doubt that their physical fitness was a major factor in their survival.

Also of considerable significance are proper living and working habits. Some say that will is nothing more than well-organized work. This criterion provides an easy means of distinguishing the strong-willed person from the spineless individual; you have only to watch these two types of people at work.

A strong-willed individual works in an organized fashion. Take a look, for example, at the working habits of eighteen-year-old weaver Natasha Popova. Natasha comes to work fifteen to twenty minutes before the start of the working day. She replaces her counterpart on the last shift in a calm and business-like fashion. Her working area and tools are always in order. She starts to work only after having thought out what she is about to do; her work is neat, rapid, and unhurried. She never starts a new piece of work without finishing the last one. In contrast to this, a weak-willed person works in a disorderly manner, starting on a new item without having finished the old one, and usually finishing neither. One seventeen-year-old boy made a very telling remark on this very matter: "If there were 48 instead of 24 hours in a day, I still would not have enough time. All the things I do are a hindrance to each other. I haven't developed the habit of precisely budgeting my time! Orderly and efficient work organization is a thing which must be learned.

Develop in yourself the habit of living and working in an organized fashion; you can start out by working out a sample schedule for one day. Include in it definite hours for waking and going to bed, taking meals, studying, and working; also set aside some time for social and Young Communist League activities, sports, club activities, etc. Then follow this schedule strictly. The strict and unwavering adherence to the schedule will result in dual benefits: you will both strengthen your will and organize and discipline your life.

It is not necessary, however, to make yourself a slave of your schedule, making it an end in itself. Certain

deviations from your timetable are sometimes inevitable. Suppose, for example, that you are urgently required to carry out an important unforeseen task. It is quite possible that on this day you will have to deprive yourself of rest. A person must not renege on his responsibilities on the excuse that this will interfere with his schedule. The development of a strong will and character is hindered not by individual and necessary deviations from the timetable, but rather by the general lack of order and habitual disorganization in life and work.

In addition to compiling a timetable, we might also suggest that you formulate for your own sake some general rules to guide your life (taking into account your specific character traits), which you must always strive to live up to. L.N. Tolstoy was still a young man when he worked out special rules for this development of his character. Among these were, for example, the following: To do everything by himself if possible, to do all that was required of him, and only under exceptional circumstances to undertake other matters without having finished the previous task.

The great Russian pedagogue K.D. Ushinskiy in his youth worked out some rules to follow in developing positive character traits. He required himself to be calm, straightforward, resolute, considerate in his actions, etc.

Similar rules were formulated by N.G. Chernyshevskiy and A.V. Suborov in their younger years.

If you can remember the novel of G. Matveyev The Seventeen-Year-Olds, note the fact that one of its heroines, Katya Ivanova, kept a special notebook entitled The Rules of My Life which helped her with her self-education.

It must be emphasized that such rules should be simple, clear, laconic, and easy to remember. For example, one young man unswervingly followed the following four rules (which he formulated with reference to his own character traits): 1) Never to succumb to first impulses (at first he was quick-tempered and rash); 2) To try to do everything by himself; 3) Never to cheat either himself or others, and 4) To play chess only in his free time (the boy was an avid chess player, and was at first severely handicapped by this passion).

In the light of all that has been said, it is very beneficial to work out the habit of planning one's action by outlining the things to be done within a given space of time, and posing special tasks for the day (such as preparing a report), the following week (to read a certain book), and the several months ahead (to attain a given sports rating), etc; this is to be followed up by a strict performance check. It is necessary to be clearly conscious of the

reasons for the failure to do a given task and to avoid repeating the committed errors,

L.N. Tolstoy attached a great deal of significance to such self-control. He even kept a diary in which he wrote accurately a daily analysis survey of his behaviour, followed by practical conclusions as a guide for further action. As soon as you start following these rules, you will clearly see the value of such control.

This is very clearly understood by working girl K., who writes: "I find that keeping tabs on myself is a great help. Every evening I add up the sum total of what I did during the day, recall my actions and deeds, and seek out errors and failures. I try to avoid these errors on future occasions".

Student S. chose to exercise a special form of self-control. He wrote out his shortcomings in the form of a table (which he called "the table of my enemies") and filled out this tablet every day by placing a dot in the appropriate square if he committed an error. He was able to judge his progress in overcoming his shortcomings according to the number of these dots and their trends.

It is of course possible to argue over the rationality of just such a form of self-control. In the final analysis, however, the matter is one of content rather than form.

We must not fail to mention self-encouragement as a potent means of stimulating efforts of the will. On many occasions, upon encountering serious obstacles, a man can begin to doubt his own powers and abilities, losing confidence and succumbing to momentary weakness. It is even worse if he then starts telling himself that he will not succeed and that he is simply not up to the task. Such autosuggestion weakens the will even more.

In such cases, one must try to encourage and give oneself confidence by not losing faith in the ability to achieve success. Such self-encouragement mobilizes the energies of an individual in the conquest of obstacles. Specifically, this aim can be served by clearly visualizing the expected result, thinking of the pride which comes with success, and anticipating the approval of your performance by the collective. It is also valuable to recall the deeds of your favorite heroes and to think of how they would have acted in your place. Finally, it is possible to resort to direct verbal self-encouragement (recall how this was done by the wounded and freezing pilot Meres'yev in the Story of a Real Man).

Self-encouragement plays a greater role than it might seem on the surface. Just recall how the young man Boris Kostrov (The Story of Youth by G. Medynskiy) swam across the

wide river. He was completely exhausted and only such self-encouragement allowed him to reach the bank. Here is an excerpt from the diary of an older schoolboy: "Once I got confused in an algebra test. So I asked Val'ka. 'Leave me alone!' he said 'I'm sinking myself'. So there I sat scribbling, tearing and tossing papers about--everything seemed to fly out of my head. The teacher came up and said: 'What's that heap of paper you have there? Perhaps you would like some tincture of valerian? Take yourself in hand!' That made me feel ashamed. There I sat saying to myself: 'Take it easy now, Aleksey Mikhaylovich, steady now!' Then I began to do everything in order and finished the problem by the end of the class period! From now on when I find anything difficult, I will always give myself encouragement this way".

Self-condemnation can also play a definite role in the stimulation of efforts of the will. This technique consists in sarcastic self-mockery, sharp reproach, criticism and condemnation of one's actions, and even self-punishment (denial of pleasure, etc.). This is what young Konstantin M. had to say on this subject: "A painful sense of my own lack of willpower assails me when I back away from difficulties. In such cases, all I have to do is mercilessly and sincerely call myself a rag and a useless person in order to awaken a sense of injured pride. After all, it is not very pleasant to realize that you are a wishy-washy character. This makes me work with such "rage" and annoyance, that I don't even recognize myself. I feel hurt, but still keep telling myself: 'This is just as you deserve; you're to blame, so you have to pay'. This certainly helps".

It is a curious fact that certain great men found it necessary and beneficial to resort to original forms of self-punishment. For example, it is known that L.N. Tolstoy, having committed something which in his opinion was a serious error, would write himself insulting letters, while A.V. Suvorov in some cases even ordered his own arrest. Apparently, self-punishment is not such a naive and amusing thing after all.

And so, my young comrades, work on yourself, improve your character and strengthen your will. Do not put off with this matter! Many of you, apparently, will arm yourselves with the appropriate intentions; I caution you not to be content with this. Do not reason by saying "it's almost the end of the month, I'll begin on the first" or "my vacation starts in a few days anyway, as soon as I get back I'll start to work on my character".

Such reasoning is already in itself evidence of a weak character. Start immediately to develop a strong will

and firm character traits. In making a start, you will already have won the first victory and made the first step on your way to achieving the goal.

Savings and Proverbs on the Subject of Will and Character

A man is that which he makes of himself.
Patience and work will overcome any obstacle.
Even water grinds a stone.
Talent means labor, will, and patience.
A man without will is a toy in the hand of any hoodlum.
It is better to be able to have one's way than to have a hundred rubles.
To live without an ideal is just to smoke up the heavens.
It is important not only to start, but also to stand and withstand.
Courage captures cities.
Courage and caution ride on a single horse.
It is good to have the patience for each wish.
If you have finished a task, go ahead and have your fun.
He who overcomes his rage is a strong man.
A master of his anger is master of anything.
Fear has big eyes.
If you hurry, you will be a laughing stock.
Obstinate creatures are used for hauling water from the well.
You can sharpen a spike on the head of a stubborn person, and it will make no difference to him.
If you want to swim--get into the water, if you want to overcome difficulties--don't run away from them.
Even a small victory over yourself makes you much stronger.
Sow a deed and reap a habit, sow a habit--reap a will.
Be able to want that which must be done.
Faithfulness to one's word is the sharpening stone of will-power.
Try to master your evil impulses.
If you have decided to run, there's no use just lying there.
Measure out seven times, and cut only once.
One today is better than two tomorrows.
Decided means done.
If you do not admit an error, you are committing another.
If you fear wolves, don't go in the forest.

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